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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN ABKHAZIA, GEORGIA

1. In my previous report concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/26551) of 7 October 1993, I discussed the consultations which had been held with the parties to the conflict and with the Russian Federation to determine how best the United Nations could assist in making progress towards a comprehensive political settlement. I indicated that I would present further recommendations to the Security Council. By its resolution 876 (1993) of 19 October 1993 the Security Council welcomed my intention to provide a further report both on the future of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and on the political aspects of the United Nations role in trying to end the conflict in Abkhazia.

A. Political efforts

2. My Special Envoy for Georgia, Ambassador Edouard Brunner, had discussions in Geneva with representatives of the Abkhaz side on 6 and 7 October and with representatives of the Georgian side on 17 and 18 October.

3. The representatives of the Abkhaz side said that they were willing to negotiate directly with the Georgian side under United Nations auspices, with the Russian Federation acting as facilitator. Asked about reported atrocities committed in Abkhazia after the violation of the cease-fire agreement of 27 July 1993, the Abkhaz side admitted that such acts had taken place, called them criminal and promised prosecution of those responsible.

4. At the later meeting with representatives of the Government of Georgia, the Georgian side also expressed its willingness to meet directly with the Abkhaz side under United Nations auspices, provided that such talks would be conducted on the basis of the inviolability of the territorial integrity of Georgia and that they would take place after the issuance of the report of the human rights mission sent to Abkhazia in the second half of October to investigate alleged human rights violations. The mission is at present completing its work and is expected to submit its report to me shortly after its return in the first half of November.

5. Mr. Brunner has informed the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in Geneva of his talks with both sides. The Russian Federation

has invited Mr. Brunner for discussions in early November with its Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Boris Pastukhov.

6. In view of the above I am planning for my Special Envoy to hold a first round of discussions in late November with both parties, under United Nations auspices and with the Russian Federation present as facilitator. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe will be invited to be represented at these talks as a participant. The discussions will focus on making progress on the question of a political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia.

B. The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

7. As I stated in my report of 7 October (S/26551, para. 11), it is evident that the mandate of UNOMIG has been invalidated by the military developments of 16-27 September.

8. The present total strength of UNOMIG is five military observers. Brigadier-General John Hvidegaard (Denmark), as the Chief Military Observer, and three military observers are in Sukhumi, Abkhazia. The fifth military observer continues to provide liaison services in Tbilisi.

9. In Sukhumi this limited mission has established good relations with Abkhaz officials and, once the fighting stopped, has been able to conduct patrols. Although the cease-fire agreement signed in Sochi on 27 July is no longer applicable, I believe that there are benefits to be drawn from the continued presence of UNOMIG in its present form and size. By remaining in the area and being seen to conduct patrols, UNOMIG will be visible evidence to the population of international concern.

10. I therefore recommend that UNOMIG should be continued at its present military strength with minimal support staff for a further three months with the following interim mandate:

(a) To maintain contacts with both sides to the conflict and military contingents of the Russian Federation;

(b) To monitor the situation and report to headquarters, with particular reference to any developments relevant to the efforts of the United Nations to promote a comprehensive political settlement.

11. I shall submit an addendum to this report stating the financial implications of the operation, which will be considerably less than those described in document S/26250/Add.1.